

Congress of the United States
Washington, D.C. 20510

August 7, 2021

Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Stephanie Pollack
Acting Administrator
Federal Highway Administration
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg and Acting Administrator Pollack:

We write to express our support for the Colorado Department of Transportation's (CDOT) imminent request for emergency federal resources to aid our state's response to severe mudslides and flash flooding along the Interstate-70 (I-70) corridor through Glenwood Canyon, Colorado. I-70 is a critical transportation corridor that connects communities from the Front Range to the Western Slope and serves as an economic lifeline for the state and the country.

Recently, torrential storms in and around Glenwood Canyon produced more rain over the span of five days than the region typically experiences in the entire month of July. The Grizzly Creek Fire burned in this same area last summer, causing instability in the watersheds and cliff faces above the canyon, leading to more catastrophic debris flows. As a result, mudslides have blocked several portions of I-70, burying the road in as much as 10 feet of mud and bringing transit to a standstill. According to CDOT preliminary reports, cleanup work, detours, and road closures along the affected portions of the interstate may take weeks to complete. Without sufficient resources to muster a swift response to this emergency, the economic impacts of the I-70 closure will continue to escalate, disrupting individual livelihoods and posing an ongoing hazard to public safety.

Congress authorized the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Emergency Relief Program to provide federal aid for highway reconstruction following natural disasters. CDOT will submit a formal request to your Department and we strongly urge its swift consideration. Resources from FHWA's Emergency Relief Program are necessary to adequately respond to this ongoing and severe crisis.

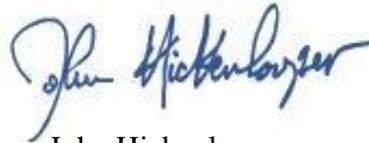
Other key transportation corridors in Colorado remain vulnerable to natural disasters. Last year, Colorado experienced three of the worst wildfires in our state's history. Barren acres of burn scars and damaged watersheds endure as testimonies of their destruction. Going forward, we are committed to working with your Department on investing in our infrastructure to make it more resilient to wildfires and floods. By implementing the necessary mitigation measures, we can better protect Colorado communities against catastrophic natural disasters.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter, which threatens the safety and wellbeing of Coloradans. We look forward to working closely with your Department on a whole-of-government response and rapid recovery effort. Please do not hesitate to contact our offices with any questions.

Sincerely,



Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator



John Hickenlooper
United States Senator



Joe Neguse
Member of Congress



Ken Buck
Member of Congress



Ed Perlmutter
Member of Congress



Lauren Boebert
Member of Congress



Diana DeGette
Member of Congress



Jason Crow
Member of Congress



Doug Lamborn
Member of Congress